

Filed for intro on 04/02/2001

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 187
By DeBerry J

A RESOLUTION To honor and commend Dr. John David Thomas
for his laudable service to Freed-Hardeman
University.

WHEREAS, It is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should salute those citizens who through their extraordinary efforts have distinguished themselves as community leaders of whom we can all be proud; and

WHEREAS, One such noteworthy person is Dr. John David Thomas, who diligently and judiciously served Freed-Hardeman University for forty years as a professor and administrator; and

WHEREAS, A distinguished scholar and a gentleman, David Thomas graduated magna cum laude from David Lipscomb University, where he received a Bachelor of Arts in Speech Communication and won State and National Forensics Awards; he went on to earn a Master of Arts in Communication from the University of Florida in 1960, and while there he served as a Forensics Coach, a Research Assistant, and a graduate instructor of Parliamentary Procedure. Lastly, he graduated from the University of Illinois with a Ph.D. in Communication in 1965; at

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Illinois he was elected into the Honor Society and served as a Research Assistant and Graduate Teacher; and

WHEREAS, In 1959, Dr. Thomas joined the staff of Freed-Hardeman as the Speech Chair and Debate Coach; while there he became reacquainted with Reba Jane Tucker, who at that time had been teaching in the Home Economics Department at Freed-Hardeman since the fall of 1958; David and Reba had met earlier at the Lipscomb Summer Lectures in 1953, where they spent time together in between lectures; the couple was joined in marriage in the summer of 1961; and

WHEREAS, At Freed-Hardeman University, as the Administrator and Professor of Communication and Interdisciplinary Studies, he astutely taught Communications, Philosophy, and team-taught Russian for Travelers; he served as Department Chair, Chief Academic Officer for 20 years, and as a University Administrator; and

WHEREAS, At Freed-Hardeman Dr. David Thomas played a vital leadership role in the University's accreditation process, which involved the school's transition from a two-year institution to a four-year institution; he also worked around the clock coordinating the grants for the Title III Higher Education Act, which gave the University grants totaling more than \$4 million; and

WHEREAS, The Title III work allowed the faculty of Freed-Hardeman University to go back to school for doctoral studies, while continuing to receive a salary; and it also obtained funding for equipment improvements in the classroom and a 3, 000 watt radio transmitter and tower that are now part of the campus radio station; and

WHEREAS, A man of faith and principal, he taught Bible classes on campus, initiated the honors program at Freed-Hardeman, and developed the Values of Human Thought and Action course that all seniors are required to take; and

WHEREAS, B.J. Naylor, Vice President of Administration and long-time friend of David and Reba Thomas, has said, "David always has a genuine interest in seeing the university go

forward. Through his work he has always exuded a high level of integrity, and I have always drawn from his strength in that area”; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Thomas has served the University since 1992 as the Faculty-Student Exchange Liaison with Russian Higher Education Institutions; and, in 2000, he was honored as a Professor Emeritus, and, in 2001, he became the International Exchange Liaison and Historian; and

WHEREAS, In addition to his work with Freed-Hardeman University, Dr. John David Thomas still finds time to lend his remarkable talents to such notable organizations as Civitan International, which he has served as the Past Valley District Director, Lt. Governor, Training Coordinator, Henderson Club President, Director, and Committee Chair; and he also was duly awarded club and district keys; and

WHEREAS, An active and devout member of the Church of Christ, he has served faithfully for many years in numerous positions, including as a Henderson Deacon, Russian Missions Coordinator, Missions Committee Member, Bible Class Instructor, and Mission Campaign Leader; and he has also preached in several States and in Russia; and

WHEREAS, This accomplished educator has led Freed-Hardeman University in achieving high level Accreditation and Quality awards, in which he served in the application process as Vice President for Computing, Quality, and Planning; he has also served as a member of the American Society for Quality, managed successful exchange agreements with three Russian institutions, and guest lectured on Quality to Business-Economics faculty and students and on Law and Religion to law school students at Bashkir State University. A member of the International Student Exchanges and Global Travel International, he has conducted group tours in the United States, Canada, and Russia; and

WHEREAS, Dr. David Thomas, in addition to his many duties, still has found time to research and write the history of Freed-Hardeman University and its predecessors, plan and manage faculty and student International Educational Exchanges between Freed-Hardeman

University and Russian and Chinese Universities, and assist with travel plans and arrangements for domestic and international travel for students, missionaries, and others; and

WHEREAS, David, alongside his wife Reba, devoted 40 years to Freed-Hardeman University, its students, and staff, and together the couple conscientiously served the Henderson Community; they also enjoyed traveling, a love they shared with their children and grandchildren; and

WHEREAS, Dr. John David Thomas is most grateful for the love and companionship he shared with his late wife, Reba Thomas; he retired from Freed-Hardeman University when she became ill to be her full-time care-giver; and

WHEREAS, In the summer of 2000 the Family and Consumer Sciences Building, where Reba Thomas taught for forty years, was renovated, and a reception was held on September 21, 2000 in Mrs. Thomas' honor; Dr. David Thomas, in memory of his wife's remarkable service to Freed-Hardeman University and the Henderson Community, established the Reba Thomas Endowment for the Family and Consumer Sciences after her death. The endowment will ensure that the building will never again fall into disrepair; and, at the request of a former student, a picture of Mrs. Thomas will hang in the main downstairs classroom honoring her many years of service to the Family and Consumer Sciences Department; and

WHEREAS, Although Reba Thomas has passed away, her imprint on Freed-Hardeman, her former students, her family, and the Henderson Community remains; Dr. Thomas and Reba Thomas built together a life of love, faith, and service; and

WHEREAS, John David Thomas, a good neighbor and friend, epitomizes the spirit of a true Tennessean; and

WHEREAS, This General Assembly finds it appropriate to pause in its deliberations to acknowledge and applaud Dr. John David Thomas for his dedication to Freed-Hardeman University and its students; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, That we hereby honor Dr. John David Thomas for his meritorious service to Freed-Hardeman University and its staff and students, commend him on his life of integrity and commitment; we also extend to him our best wishes for every future success.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.